



JOB SHADOWING

Job shadowing can be a great way to expand your network and get a real-world glimpse of a specific role, work environment or field. This can help you make decisions regarding your coursework and career path.

Job shadowing is following— or “shadowing”—a practicing professional as they go through their workday to help get a sense of that professional’s role or field. It’s typically short in duration, ranging from a day to a week, and can be set up as part of a formal program or arranged independently.

TYPES OF SHADOWING

There are two types of job shadowing: **formal** and **informal**. Formal job shadowing is set up as part of a program such as DePaul’s Job Shadow Program, a one-day learning opportunity for undergraduate students offered over Winter Intersession and other points during the academic year. You can also pursue job shadowing opportunities by tapping your own network, including friends, families, professional contacts and DePaul alumni in the field. For the latter, DePaul’s Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) network can be a good place to start.

Benefits of shadowing

EXPLORE

Job shadowing offers a low investment way to explore different career functions and types of work spaces. Shadowing someone in a specific role will give you an idea of the other roles that are part of that industry.

EXPERIENCE

During a job shadow, you get to experience the day-to-day of a specific job through observation; you’ll get first-hand experience with the pace and activities of a person operating in a job field that interests you.

EXPAND

Job shadowing expands your network and helps you connect to professionals. When it comes time to find an internship or get advice on your resume and cover letter, you can reach out to your job shadow hosts for advice!

How to get started

- 1 Connect with your existing network (family, faculty, peers, etc.) to get the contact information or referrals for people who work in your field of interest.
- 2 Login to DePaul's Alumni Sharing Knowledge program to search for alumni and look for the "job shadowing" label in the "HOW I CAN HELP" section of their profile or just filter by "Job Shadowing." You can send a message directly from their profile!
- 3 Search for DePaul alumni on LinkedIn, and try to determine their work email address.
- 4 Use the sample email/letter for your initial contact. Be gently persistent— send a follow-up note if you do not receive a reply within two weeks.

Make the most of the experience!

CONFIRM THE DETAILS

Be clear on whom you're shadowing, their location and what time to arrive. Ask about attire, and err on the side of overdressing.

MEET PEOPLE

Talk to as many people as you can during the shadow. Don't be afraid to ask for a business card after a good conversation.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Visit the company website and the LinkedIn page of the person you're shadowing to see how they describe their responsibilities. Jot down questions.

Dear Ms./Mr. **[Last Name]**,

My name is **[your name]** and I am a student at DePaul University. I am in the process of exploring career paths and believe you would be an excellent resource to help me gain firsthand knowledge about **[specific field or industry]**.

I am looking for opportunities to shadow professionals and conduct informational interviews to better understand what it's like to be a **[role or general job title]**. Would you be willing to let me job shadow you or someone at your organization during a typical workday?

I understand you are busy and your time is valuable. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me by email at **[your email address]** or phone me at **[your phone number]**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT YOURSELF

Why did you choose this company and individual to shadow? What's your career direction? What do you see as your strengths?

TAKE NOTES

How do people conduct meetings or conference calls? How does the person you shadow keep track of details or manage tasks? Make note of terms and expressions used.

SEND A NOTE OF THANKS

Be sure to write a thank-you note to the person you shadowed within a day or two of the experience.